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all the renderings that seem to him especially felicitous, the list would be very much longer than that above.

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A GROUP OF OLD AUTHORS.

A Group of Old Authors. By CLYDE FURST, Lecturer for the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1899.

MR. FURST has gathered into an attractive volume five lectures to popular audiences, hoping, as he says in his preface,

"to add to popular knowledge of older European literature by giving detailed illustrations of its condition at several periods between the sixth and the seventeenth centuries."

Mr. Furst need hardly have entertained the fear, which he intimates he felt, that the unfamiliarity of his themes might deter the reader. His essays could hardly fail, even upon a cursory examination, to attract those they were designed primarily to reach, or to prove, upon further acquaintance, both interesting and stimulating. Even those who approach them with some previous knowledge may find their profit in the careful and conscientious treatment, which their subjects receive at his hands.

The first paper, "A Gentleman of King James's Day: Dr. John Donne," treats of the life of the great Dean in its relation to his works, with an examination of the diverse opinions passed upon his verse. As the title indicates, the paradox in Donne's life is brought out, by which, though seemingly unfitted by birth, training, tastes, and a somewhat wild and idle youth, for the profession James forced upon him, he could yet, in so surprising a way, justify as well by practical piety and good works as by his eminence as a preacher, that wise and foolish monarch's insistence. Mr. Furst holds so closely to his main purpose, the exposition of the intimate relation between the events of Donne's life and the substance of his verse, that one misses those picturesque details with regard to Donne's personal peculiarities, which make so much of one's impression of

him as derived from Walton's inimitable biography. It is wise to make little of these, perhaps, for they might serve only to accentuate that first (and erroneous) impression the reader is apt to receive from his verse, that it is curiously bizarre, eccentric, and obscure, and that only. It is much better, no doubt, to emphasize, as Mr. Furst does, the sterling traits of Donne's character and the real virtues of his verse,—its depth of thought, sincerity, emotional intensity, and its noble, though broken and irregular, music.

The papers which follow, "A Mediæval Love Story" (Patient Grissel) and "The Miraculous Voyage of St. Brandan," are studies in comparative literature, sufficiently comprehensive in their inclusion of the various versions, well ordered, simple, and clear. Each story has a charm and appeal of its own, and both are well adapted to enforce the point the author no doubt had in mind—one new to the general reader and most interesting—the way in which a story is found diffused through the whole range of medieval literature by borrowing and adaptation, and that miracle of persistent vitality, natural enough in a way but always stimulating to the imagination, by which it reappears again and again in various literatures and at various periods even to modern times.

The two remaining papers are drawn from an earlier time. The subject of "An Anglo-Saxon Saint" the life of Aldhelm, and the culture and scholarship of the monasteries in England in the seventh century is almost entirely novel, as a theme for popular presentment. Mr. Furst succeeds in making the actual Aldhelm real to the reader, while not omitting the quaint and delightful legends that associate themselves with his name. He gives an adequate idea of those works of Aldhelm's that remain to us in their cryptic mediæval Latin, and of their scope and purpose, including the famous Riddles, as compared with the Anglo-Saxon collection. Mr. Furst, by the way, unhesitatingly refers to the Anglo-Saxon Riddles as Cynewulf's—and surely, as regards some of them at least, no one will dispute the assumption, if there is any virtue as evidence in a universally acknowledged "moral certainty." Mr. Furst deplors the loss of Aldhelm's works in the vernacular, and justly contends that he must have had an

important influence upon the development of Anglo-Saxon verse.

The concluding paper upon *Beowulf*, which perhaps in concession to its importance Mr. Furst styles "The Oldest English Poem," provides an abstract of the story with such explanatory material in regard to the time and place of its composition and the various conditions determining the character of the early epic, as may enable the student to read the poem with better understanding and increased enjoyment.¹

A feature worth noting of these essays is the care displayed in respect to the citation of approved critical authorities. Mr. Furst has been almost too assiduous in this regard, if that were possible, but they are introduced skilfully in such a way that the essays in no case fail to convey a distinctly personal and individual impression. The volume will undoubtedly be welcomed by those who listened to the papers when they were delivered as lectures, and by reaching a larger audience in their present form will, it may be hoped, perpetuate and extend the influence which it was the aim and inspiration of those lectures to exert toward winning the student and general reader to unfamiliar fields of English literature, and literatures related to it.

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TOMAR LAS DE VILLADIEGO.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—In the *Notes*, Vol. xiv, columns 516-517, Dr. Charles Carroll Marden publishes an interesting note upon the colloquial Spanish expression *tomar calzas de Villadiego* which, as far as known, occurs for the first time in the

¹ The author desires the insertion of a note in connection with this review to the effect that he

"regrets not having noticed that in this concluding paper, during its years of growth and revision as a lecture, the marks of several quotations from Mr. Stopford Brooke's *Early English Literature* had become neglected."

Celestina (Act xii.) "The origin of the expression," he says, "is an unsettled problem."

An article¹ by Benito Mas y Prat giving a satisfactory theory of the origin and history of this phrase was published in the *Almanaque de la Ilustración* for 1890. Its substance is as follows.

The origin of the expression is historical. During the thirteenth century the persecutions of the Jews reached such a pitch of barbarity, that Ferdinand III., not wishing to break entirely with this rich and prosperous people, took measures for their protection. By a privilege granted in 1223, and given in full by Benito Mas as found in the *Memorias para la historia del santo Rey*,² he took under his protection the Jews of Villadiego near Burgos.

Some years prior to the granting of this privilege, the Lateran Council, for the better separation of the two races, had decreed that the Jews should wear garments distinct in form and color from those of the Christians. This distinguishing color was probably yellow, as that had been recommended for this purpose in the Bull of Paul IV.

Now the *Celestina* says definitely that the *calzas de Villadiego* were to be taken at the first sound of alarm. "Apercíbete á la primera voz que oyeres á tomar calzas de Villadiego." This advice would fit admirably the case of those Jews who, living in Burgos and wearing in spite of the regulations the ordinary clothing of the Castilians, were suddenly obliged to flee from impending persecution. In such an emergency they could dress themselves in the garments that showed them to be protected by the King's privilege and retire for safety to Villadiego.

The expression as found in the *Celestina* must therefore be construed as meaning originally: "to get under cover, to seek shelter;" later it was often used, as it is at the present time, to mean: "to leave hastily," "to run like forty."

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¹ Not mentioned by Vñaza, *Biblioteca histórica de la filología castellana*, 1893.

² Compiled by Burriel (see Amador de los Ríos, *Hist. Crit. de la Lit. Esp.*, Vol. iii. p. 435, note 1). The original privilege seems still to exist (see Amador de los Ríos, *Hist. de los Judíos en España*, Vol. i. p. 357, note 1).